

THE RLS CHRONICLE

News of the Riverside Live Steamers



September 2009



Dave Bunts' "Words O' Wisdom"
Work, work and more work!
RLS Travels
Another One Bites the Dust
Plus so much more...



The Final Pieces of the Puzzle

Suffering through one of the hottest days of the year so far, a dedicated group of RLSers bring out one of the final track panels that will tie our compound into the main line. In all, 200+ feet of track was placed, aligned, and partially ballasted. Folks, it's just about time to fire up the locomotives again!



Dave Bunts' Words O' Wisdom

“It’s a supposed to be a hobby, d*** it.” That line was heard more than once on Saturday the 29th of August. With lunch time temps in the shade hovering at 106, there was some serious muttering going on while the track was being installed for the engine lead. I don’t know who said it first, but the first time I heard it was from Brook Adams as he knelt in the dirt putting ties in at a newly made track joint. I wasn’t sure I heard it with the sweat running down his face, but then he repeated it, over and over. Probably the only way he could make it through the day. And what a day: A dedicated group made it through to the afternoon, and we have all but about 40 feet of Scout siding back in the ground. The alignment is in place, but it still needs to be leveled, the remainder of the ballast installed, and tamped. BUT as Dave Parrot pointed out – “It’s good enough for a Shay”. I almost thought he was going to go off and get his to go run on the railroad. Ron Wilkerson is the only one that has been able to play (We did lift one of his engines down to ground level for use with the weed train, so I guess he’s allowed.) but that will change effective the close of work on Saturday, September 5. We should be able to run trains from the compound to railroad and back effective the first run day in September. Come on out and run, we need to find out what is working, and what isn’t. I will advise all of us to run slow, we haven’t been on the rails much in the last 5 months, so we really have no idea of the condition of the rest of RLS. The public run days will start on the second run day of the month so that we can get the chance to shake down the operation before we embarrass ourselves with the public on board. The Hunter is still down, trailing truck problems arose at the last minute, and the tender trucks are still with Ron Wilkerson, awaiting wheels. So anyone who feels like running for the public on the 27th, please raise your hand now.

We have had a long and tortured road to get back to this point, but with the dedication of club members showing up virtually every weekend for the last 5 months, we have made it. And it wasn’t just one or two; it was 10 to 15 members at a time. You ALL deserve a very hearty Thank You from the riders of RLS, but they will never know how much work was put in. You, on the other hand, **do** know how much work went into this, and how much everyone participated. (AND we did it all without the aid of FEMA.) I am proud of being a part of this organization. Thanks for making it as good as it is.

PS: Start thinking of who you would like to see on the next Board of Directors. Half of us are being relieved of duty in November, and the BoD does make a big difference in how the facility runs. Think about it, and run if approached by a member who thinks you can do it. It really isn’t a punishment, but a vote of confidence in your ability to help guide RLS for the next 2 years.

You know you’re addicted to live-steaming when...

You submit a bill to the federal government hoping the “fix-er-upper” steam locomotive project you just purchased qualifies under the “Cash for Clunkers” program.



RLS Travels: The Bitter Creek Western

As the club has been shut down for the past 6 months, RLS members have turned to taking their equipment to various railroads in and around Southern California in order that we quell the burning need for steam. Several members headed north on August 7, 8, and 9, to Arroyo Grande where the Bitter Creek Western railroad hosted their annual Narrow Gauge Meet. For the steam enthusiast, disappointment was nowhere to be seen. Each day brought forth a plethora of exquisite locomotives and train-sets in 2.5" scale, 3.0" scale, 3.75" scale and even a massive 4.5" scale 2-4-4 tank engine! Yes, there was also quite a bit of 1.5" scale present, just to round out the numbers.



For any person modeling in live steam, diesel and and/or electric, the Bitter Creek layout is truly a treat to run on. Even if one does not own any equipment, taking a lap (or three) around this railroad leaves one stunned as to what can be done on a mid-sized (5 acres) piece of land. Tunnels, trestles, grades, horseshoe curves, stations, and towns are woven through fantastic foliage and greenery. Add to that a compliment of full signaling, powered switches and, because of its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, blessedly cool days, this railroad becomes the live-steamer's paradise. Each night at the Summit Patio, Karl Hovanitz (Owner) and his dedicated volunteers put forth excellent BBQ dinners, entertaining movies, slide shows and special presentations as trains passed by and disappeared into the dark evening. One word seems to fit the whole experience perfectly: delightful.



RLS members present to take in all the sights, sounds, and charm this railroad has to offer were Greg Casford; Al, Lynn, Brian, and Greg Ratliff; Nathan, Jonathan, and Dave Parrott, Bill McLaughlin and his wife, Donna; Larry Jongerious; Ron and Betty Wilkerson; Paul Lavicott; Chris, Larranne, Tyler and Caitlyn Enright.

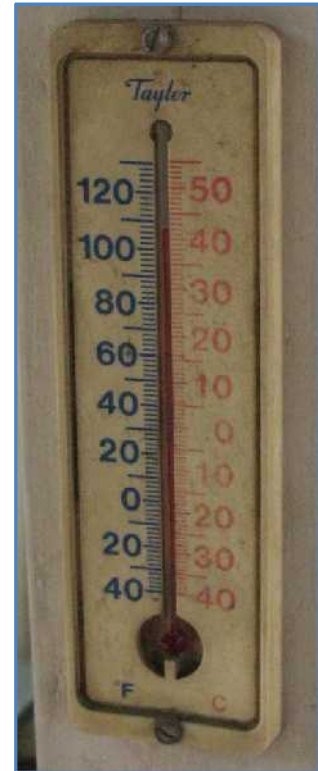
For anyone interested in any of the run days open to live-steamers and modelers everywhere, check the Bitter Creek's websites at www.bittercreekwesternrr.org .



“Work, work, work, work.... Hello boys, did you miss me?”

The month of August was, much like July, a mucho work-month as the RLS replaced its last panels of track thus finally connecting the compound to the mainline. Beginning with August 1, work crews leveled, ballasted and tamped the Columbia Yard and the new mainline between the Columbia and Panoramic Siding. It's not exactly the most glorious and/or “manly” work, but it still needs doing before locos and rains can run.

Due to delays with putting in the new water main into the compound area, very little work was done on August 8, 15 and 22nd. However, when the water line work was completed on August 24th, RLS members showed up on the 29th ready to put in an amazing effort of track laying: By 2:00 that afternoon, the entire lead was in place, straightened, and pre-ballasted! All that on what will probably become the hottest day of the year for the City of Riverside: 107 degrees..... in the shade! And remember: there isn't any shade where the compound lead runs, so the brave few that showed (about 16 of us) were literally cooking themselves in order to get the work done.



The following weekend (September 5), the last pieces of track were laid on Scout Siding, the final loads of ballast were shoveled in place, and the final tamping and leveling were performed. By 1:00, in the afternoon, with the temperature hovering at 100 degrees in the shade, Bill McLaughlin and Chris Enright fired their locomotives and thus became the first trains in nearly six months to run up the compound lead and make a lap around the entire mainline. Several folks remained to “celebrate” the moment as RLS crossed the threshold of “closed” to “back in business!”

Ready for a Run Day?

It's official! The first run day after being closed for 24 weeks will be September 13th. Be sure to come out and celebrate the end of what will be six very long months of little steam at Hunter Park. Officially, we won't be pulling the public as the railroad needs a good shake-down so we can find out what needs fixing and where. Then, over the following two weeks, we'll “Git ‘er done!” and open our railroad to hauling the public train on Sept. 27. Join us! It should be a memorable day.



Goodbye, Meadows & Lake Kathleen Railroad

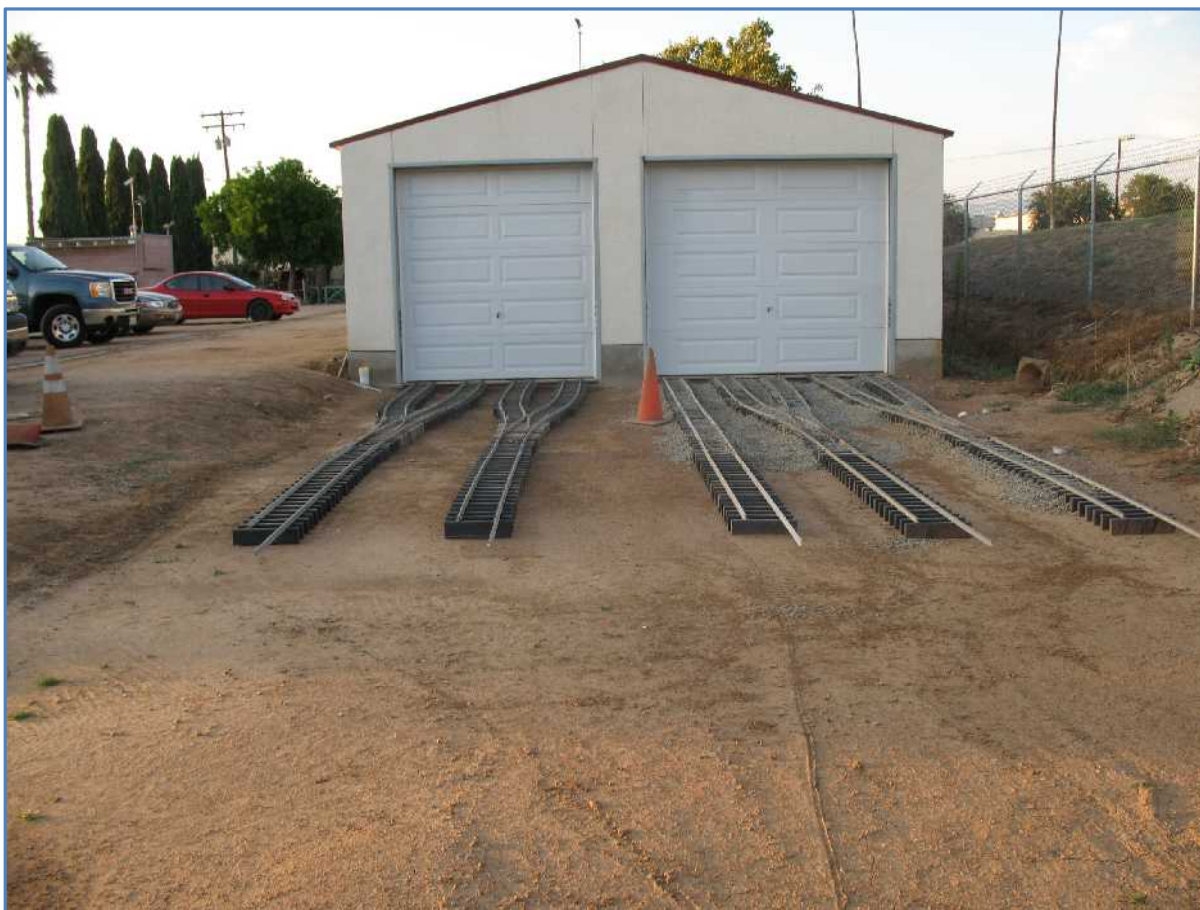
After many hard months of fighting the Lane County Government of Oregon, Ray and Kathleen Robinson (the owners of the Meadows & Lake Kathleen Railroad) have decided to close up shop and tear out their tracks. The story of how it got to this point is strange, cockeyed, and at points, outlandish as a county government's tax-thirst has driven a family and their hobby into bankruptcy.

The railroad itself is an 18" gauge wonder that travels through beautiful landscapes and steam fronts. When purchased, the land was a run-down cattle ranch, but was meticulously restored and nursed to its now natural water-shed status. In fact, the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife went so far as stating that the Robinson's efforts on their property have resulted in one of the finest native cutthroat trout spawning areas in Oregon. Yet, much like the trials and tribulations of RLS's own Robbie Diehl of Williams, AZ, the whole ordeal with the county government began with an article published in the local paper. It was then that government officials felt they needed to tax the Robinson's for building an amusement park without any of the proper permits. They were also insistent that the Robinson's charge a per-ride fee, of which the county would, naturally, tax. As the arguments over the status of "Amusement Park" or "Hobby" ensued, the county's own attorney stated, "We want our cut, we have bills to pay too!" This same attorney's rationale for his argument was: They have, "...spent a lot of money on that railroad, what's a few thousand dollars more...?"

When residents of the tiny town of Deadwood, Oregon began to unify on the side of the Robinson's and political pressure was mounting from Oregon State Officials that included a state senator submitting a bill that would have protected the railroad, a smear-style story about Ray Robinson's 30-year-old felony conviction of "lewd and lascivious conduct with a minor" appeared in the local paper... all sources withheld. Lane County Commissioner Bill Dwyer said that though he commended Mr. Robinson for the fine reformation of himself, the issue at hand is a precautionary principle and people should be informed before they associate themselves with the Robinson's and send their children to ride Ray's railroad.

The Robinson's finally made the choice to tear out their railroad in order to avoid the taxes, fines and fees of operating an "Amusement Park" and informed the county officials of their intent to do so in early June, 2009. Shortly afterward, a county assessor showed up on their property for a routine inspection. On June 20th, the Robinson's received a notice of increase on their property taxes: from \$500 a year to a staggering \$23,000 a year... retroactive to 2003. Now, the Robinson's are not only tearing out the railroad, now they need to sell it (Everything: track, trestles, cars, buildings (minus the locomotive because it's not owned by the Robinson's)) in order to pay the taxes, fines, and (get this) late fees from 2003 forward.

For more information about this travesty and all the events and articles that led to this point, visit <http://members.peak.org/~kmr3/M&LKRailroad/>



Another year has passed: On August 30, 2008, the lower level of the then-to-be-named Noble/Quick Building was being readied for connection to the “outside world”. Notice the compressor building standing in the background. My... how things have changed!

COMING EVENTS:

Sept. 12: Work Day (See Website)

Sept. 13: **RUN DAY!!!**

Sept. 19: Work Day and Board Meeting

Sept. 27: **RUN DAY (open to public)**

Oct. 11: **RUN DAY!!!**

Oct. 19: Work Day and Monthly Meeting

Oct. 23 – 25: **FALL MEET!**

Visit the RLS Website: www.steamonly.org

The R.L.S. Chronicle is published by The Riverside Live Steamers, Inc., P.O. Box 5512, Riverside, CA. 92518. The railroad is located at Hunter Park, 1496 Columbia Ave., Riverside, CA. Call (951) 779-9024 during scheduled activities for more information. Public run days are the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month. Work days (Fun Days) are the 3rd Saturday followed by the Monthly Board Meeting at 1:00 p.m. at Hunter Park.

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